



LOUISIANA SENATE

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GOVERNOR SIGNS KEY EDUCATION BILLS AUTHORED BY AREA SENATORS

This week, Governor John Bel Edwards signed into law two key education reform bills, Senate Bill 477 by Senator Gerald Boudreaux (D-Lafayette) and Senate Bill 262 by Senator Dan “Blade” Morrish (R – Jennings). The measures, which were passed unanimously in both the Senate and House of Representatives, were crafted in cooperation with a wide array of education stakeholders.

SB 477 by Sen. Boudreaux changes the Value Added Model used for teacher evaluations. Previously, 50 percent of a teacher’s evaluation was based on classroom observations and 50 percent was linked to a review of student achievement and growth. That review includes how students fared on key tests and results from a complex formula designed to show a teacher’s academic impact on students. That formula is called the value added model, or VAM. Under this new law, VAM now accounts for 35 percent of the evaluation and other signs of student achievement account for 15 percent. Classroom observations of teacher performance by principals still make up the other half of the job review.

“From day one, the key stakeholders, the teachers, have asked that their voices be heard,” said Sen. Boudreaux. “We value the positive impact our educators have on our students and we have truly benefitted from partnering with them in developing these reforms. We look forward to keeping them at the table in the future.”

SB 262 by Sen. Morrish, who chairs the Senate Education Committee, continues the statewide transition policies in place for the last two years for another year. This means that for the 2016-2017 school year, the distribution of school and district letter grades shall not vary from that in the 2012-2013 school year, unless the school or district improved in its performance. Therefore, there will not be fewer 'A' schools next year no matter how challenging the new standards. Similarly, in 2016-2017, test scores will be collected but will not be considered in evaluating teacher performance or determining student placement or promotion.

“It is important that we continue to work together to ensure that our teachers and our students have every opportunity to excel under the newly adopted standards,” said Sen. Morrish.

“We have to make decisions up at the state capitol that will create the best environment possible for learning and teaching. We believe that this legislation does just that.”

SB 477, now Act 504, and SB 262, now Act 498, were both part of Gov. Edwards’ education reform package for the 2016 Regular Legislative Session and were both effective upon his signature.

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